



ARE MORE ORGANISATIONS ADOPTING A MULTI-CLOUD APPROACH? IF SO, WHY?

Veritas Technologies, a leader in multi-cloud data management, has announced the results of a global survey spanning 13 countries indicating that the majority of global organisations (56%) operate with a cloud-first mentality when it comes to deploying new applications and managing workloads. Only one percent of organisations reported that they will not be adopting cloud over the next two years. However, the study reveals that significant misconceptions exist on the responsibility for data management, with 69% of organisations wrongfully believing data protection, data privacy and compliance are the responsibility of the cloud service provider.

The Truth in Cloud study, commissioned by Veritas and conducted by Vanson Bourne, surveyed 1,200 global business and IT decision makers and revealed that customers are embracing the multi-cloud as a key component of their business strategies. Within the survey, customers indicated they use a variety of cloud service providers, including public clouds and hosted private clouds.

With respect to Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) specifically, over two-

thirds (67%) of organisations state they use, or plan to use, two or more cloud providers. Forty-two percent say they are using, or plan to use, three or more cloud providers, with common goals of improving resiliency and data security as well as reducing capital expenditures (Capex) and operating expenses (Opex). As customers embrace the cloud, the research explores three key areas of focus: misconceptions of data management in the public cloud, rise in multi-cloud adoption and future cloud trends.

Rise in Multi-Cloud Adoption

The Truth in Cloud research also shows that on average, organisations are using, or plan to use, multiple cloud platforms, ranging from public clouds to hosted private clouds. However, many organisations continue to face challenges getting to the cloud regardless of whether it is a public cloud or a hosted private cloud. The common barriers are:

- Complexity with cloud migration (37%)
- Legacy technology limitations (36%)
- Lack of in-house skills (38%)
- Lack of a clear strategy (32%)
- Data silos (27%)

Currently, 75% of organisations work with an IaaS public cloud provider and surprisingly, 16% of respondents say that they use, or plan to use, five or more cloud providers. Respondents stated that data privacy, security and compliance, workload performance and uptime are the top deciding factors impacting cloud provider selection.

"We are living in the age of multi-cloud, where organisations require a policy-driven data management strategy to protect valuable data assets across multiple data centres, public and hybrid clouds. In the Middle East, we see concern over the ability to manage and protect data slowing some cloud adoption decisions," said Johnny Karam, vice president emerging market at Veritas. "Data Management in the cloud is critical to helping customers ensure compliance and protection of their data while extracting maximum value. Our opportunity is to communicate this to customers and provide the reassurance to help address concerns and realise the full potential of cloud."

We asked three experts about the challenges of adopting a multi-cloud strategy. ■

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Cloud computing has been a transformational force in the IT industry. Several of the most recent innovations driving growth and innovative business models are a product of the technology. Cloud adoption in the Middle East is growing significantly as enterprises are seeing tremendous value in having a scalable and flexible pool of resources at their fingertips. The assurance of lower IT costs and scalability has drawn IT decision makers to move their business-critical data and applications to the cloud.

Customers are driven to cloud services for cost optimisation, agility and more time for them to focus on creating profitability avenues as most IT operations are shifted to cloud and managed by serviced providers. Cloud allows easy and feasible extension of business capabilities and provides enterprises with a competitive edge over those who are lagging on the technology front. The popularity of the model in the Middle East is another driver towards cloud adoption.

As part of their digitisation initiatives, an increasing number of enterprises in the region are adopting a multi-cloud strategy. A single cloud approach works well for small businesses and start-ups. However, an enterprise's different business units have diverse requirements and workloads, which cannot be met by a single cloud model.

A multi-cloud approach offers organisations a number of benefits from low costs, unlimited scalability, agility and improving disaster recovery and security. By working with multiple cloud services providers, enterprises can lessen their dependency on a single provider and can also avoid vendor lock-ins, data centre outages and bandwidth issues. Compliance regulations and data sovereignty requirements have also led companies to implement the multi-cloud approach.

Through a multi-cloud approach, organisations can leverage the best of breed technologies and services from different innovative vendors and cloud service providers to meet the requirements of each department. They can mix and match best-in-class solutions and services from different cloud services providers to create a customised solution for their business. This approach also helps them to adopt new technologies from multiple vendors in a phased

manner to meet scalability demands thereby enabling them to be flexible, where they can scale up or scale down as their requirements change.

Adopting a multi-cloud strategy comes with its own set of challenges. Managing multi-cloud solutions from different vendors across different cloud environments can be difficult and time consuming. If not monitored and managed properly, it can lead to several operational issues. Many regional organisations are signing on managed cloud services providers to assist them with their multi-cloud solutions, where they will manage issues with interoperability, infrastructure, network, storage, backup management and monitoring, security and other challenges. By partnering with a trusted managed cloud services provider, organisations will be able to monitor their cloud solutions from one single place and avoid complications. They will also get regular maintenance and 24x7 support to ensure issues are resolved quickly. ■



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For consumers and businesses alike, digital technology has proven disruptive. Consumers can, in theory, embrace or reject the trend as they see fit. But a reluctance to embrace digital technologies can leave organisations falling behind competitors.

The good news is that enterprises in the Middle East are already making strides in this area. In a recent survey we conducted, of 300 IT decision makers in the region, 72% of respondents stated that their organisations are committed to being information-based companies.

It is often the responsibility of IT leaders to innovate in line with the business's digital vision, without breaking the bank. In response to this, public cloud has seen increased adoption across a multitude of industries. The demand for simpler storage, combined with a data explosion, has created the perception of an unstoppable drive towards the public cloud. A 'cloud-first'

strategy is the popular buzzword for executive leadership. But it's important to understand what that really means. The narrative that cloud and traditional storage are at direct odds, while compelling, is oversimplified. Within today's landscape, there are more options than just public cloud and traditional on-premise.

Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) has exploded, while private cloud has also seen significant increase in relevancy. A strategy that deploys some combination of these options is referred to as hybrid cloud. This is a route that most enterprises in the Middle East are opting with 69% of businesses saying they will increase their public cloud usage in the next 18 to 24 months.

In parallel, private cloud (57%) and SaaS (56%) usage is also expected to grow in the same timeframe. Strategic infrastructure is key to optimising for the new reality of digital business

– and that means building a hybrid cloud. Today, major retail brands – which were previously never considered technology companies – are generating more data than high tech firms did a decade ago. To gain advantage from that data, organisations must be highly analytical and strategic about which workloads and applications live where.

Analytics and business intelligence are two of the top focus areas for CIOs with 74% of survey respondents reporting that they see more demand in the business for real-time analytics than a year ago. To effectively utilise both, IT professionals must understand the strengths and limitations of different infrastructure options to create the optimal hybrid environment for their organisation. Public cloud has revolutionised the standard for easy IT. It's simpler to manage, and removes the time and energy burden of technology upgrades from the customer. It's a utility model, which is attractive to organisations for which CapEx is limited, and provides the flexibility needed to scale up and down quickly depending on fluctuating demand. The other side of the same coin is scale over time. As an organisation's data requirements grow, so does the public cloud bill. Many CIOs report directly to the CFO, and when we speak to them, cost certainty is a recurring theme. A volatile and unpredictable operating expense can be untenable when building a digital organisation. ■

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According to Gartner, by 2020, a no-cloud policy will be as rare as a no-internet policy is today. Cloud-first, and even cloud-only, is replacing the no-cloud stance that has dominated many large vendors in recent years.

Cloud will increasingly be the default option for software deployment. This does not mean that everything will be cloud-based, and this concern will remain valid in some cases. However, the extreme position of having nothing cloud-based will largely disappear. Hybrid will be the most common usage of the cloud and will require public cloud to be part of the overall strategy.

Gartner points out that by 2019, more than 30% of the 100 largest vendors' new software investments will have shifted from cloud-first to cloud-only. The well-established stance of cloud-first in software design and planning is

gradually being augmented or replaced by cloud-only. This also applies to private and hybrid cloud scenarios. This inevitable shift to the cloud will also influence IT departments to accept the need to continuously innovate and change and align with lines of business.

Over the last few years, businesses and IT departments have invested in multi-cloud environments, both public and private as well as from different vendors. While there are associated gains from such a cloud-first approach, this has created management complexity and workload spill-overs. These are increasingly becoming significant and demanding a longer-term approach towards a hybrid cloud strategy with the full portfolio of development tools and service level agreements.

Since the initial hype about public cloud, there has been a realistic awakening among businesses about the true value and cost of moving to the cloud. While the initial expectation was about reducing the cost of IT operations, by increasingly moving them to a cloud platform, this simplistic expectation has proved elusive. The cost of managing public cloud IT operations has become more expensive than previous expectations.

One reason is the skill sets for driving adoption of public cloud platforms need to be built up in addition to maintaining skill sets for managing traditional IT operations. So, while the cost of legacy operations has remained constant the cost of adding skills to manage public cloud operations have grown.

In the coming months, IT departments will review their investments made in first generation public cloud and evaluate their return on investments from operational expenditures. Increasingly IT departments are assessing the benefits of spending the same amounts on private clouds and this approach is gaining traction in market segments with high value transactional data. Service providers that can help organisations build their private clouds while driving business agility and managing their costs, will increasingly become in-demand.

As usage of hybrid cloud solutions increases within a business, IT departments will be increasingly pressured to ensure standardisation of services for internal and external customers. This will drive IT departments to invest in hybrid cloud solutions and service providers that facilitate creation and management of standardised services over other solution and service providers. ■